

## **Professional Statement**

Metadata and information architecture are foundational to making information resources work. Whether it be records at a government agency, collections in an archive, digital assets at a corporation, or books in a library, if information resources are not described well, they will not be found. I was drawn to metadata and information architecture because as the backbone of information resources, they play such a fundamental role in how information is found and therefore used. Both metadata and information architecture require organization and logic, but also empathy, as user experience design is critical to building out usable models. I aim to pursue a career thinking through these issues of information access and management.

### **Experience**

Previous to my MLIS, I spent six years in the workforce in the legal and publishing fields. This experience was invaluable for developing my project management and communication skills, as I worked in high-pressure environments that often required collaboration across teams. More specifically to information studies, I gained experience with records management, copyright, permissions, and search engine optimization.

During my MLIS, I sought professional opportunities that would expose me to a variety of institutions and information types, to get a better understanding of the scope of the field and my place within it. Within these opportunities, I was able to integrate what I had learned from various classes. For example, the “Metadata” and “Computer Systems and Programming” courses greatly informed my work at the UCLA Digital Library Program, where I support the description and ingest of thousands of digital assets. This work involves creating metadata models as well as using Python to generate files and automated metadata.

At the Getty Research Institute, I worked on data modeling and information architecture at a deeper level, reconciling legacy metadata to a linked open data model in one internship, and contributing to the Getty Vocabularies in another. The “Digital Humanities” and “Subject Cataloging” courses were helpful here, as my work involved significant data cleaning with OpenRefine and thinking through the implications of any elisions made in the name of standardization.

I continued this type of description work, but from the archival side, at the Go For Broke National Education Center, a community archive where I processed collections. Concepts from “Values and Communities” and “Archives, Records, and Memory” have been critical to completing this work, and understanding issues community archives are facing.

At the Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics, I developed my user experience skills by designing a survey for collecting data requests. The survey transformed a complex process involving several forms into a streamlined survey that was structured to ensure accurate and consistent data collection. In addition to “Human-Computer Interaction,” critical courses for accomplishing this were “Data Management and Practice” and “Data Curation and Policy,” both of which were taught by my supervisor at the Schaeffer Center, Jillian Wallis.

I also gained experience with the front-end of information services through my work at the Fowler Museum and UCLA Library Special Collections. At the Fowler, I taught K-12 students visiting the museum, creating tours that facilitated active learning and participation. “Artifacts and Cultures” was an important course for orienting myself within the museum, and analyzing how its curation intentionally told stories. This informed the curricula I developed for my tours.

At Library Special Collections, I work on the reference desk, helping users navigate the collections and place requests through the catalog. “History of Books and Literacy Technologies” was important for deepening my understanding of special collections, while “Historical Research Methods” challenged me to think critically about primary source documents and their biases. Both of these courses have informed my reference work at Library Special Collections.

### **Professional Organizations and Enrichment**

I am an active member of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) student chapter and Southern California chapter, and plan to remain so going into my career. In my two years with SLA, I have attended a number of different events, including tours, day-long trainings, and happy hours. At all of these activities, members have been open and helpful, sharing their experiences in the field. Because I see myself working in a digital library, or in metadata in a non-LIS environment, I feel that SLA will be especially helpful as it is meant to connect information professionals who can feel siloed in such specialized settings.

I am also a member of the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) student chapter, through which I have attended technical trainings. ASIS&T has been a good resource for connecting with other informatics students within the program, to talk through issues and share resources. Going forward, I would like to be involved with a similar group after graduation, to ensure I keep up-to-date on LIS technologies and issues. While there is no ASIS&T Los Angeles chapter, there are alternatives like the San Gabriel Valley UX (SGVUX) group, of which I am already a member.

In addition to participating in professional organizations, I have also attended conferences, trainings, and webinars to supplement my in-class studies. This includes the Henry Stewart

Digital Asset Management conference, where I met information professionals working in diverse industries like hospitality, entertainment, and retail. This year I will attend the Information Architecture Conference, SLA 2020, and Keystone Digital Humanities. For enrichment, I have attended the Library Carpentry and various data training sessions. I have also found SLA and the Association of College & Research Libraries to host helpful webinars.

Going forward, I will continue this type of engagement, as it will keep me apprised of important issues in the field and new technologies. I am especially eager to attend future conferences. Thus far, I have been fortunate enough to have secured scholarship funding for all of the conferences attended; many of these opportunities exist for early-career professionals, and I also hope that whatever institution I work for will support such enrichment opportunities.

### **Career Goals**

While I am primarily interested in metadata and information architecture, my time doing reference and instruction work showed me that I enjoy the front-end side of information work as well. Accordingly, it is important to me to find a position that allows me to work directly with users as well. This can look different in different contexts—within a library, this could be working as a digital librarian who also leads outreach and instruction efforts; in a corporate context, this could include training people on systems and answering questions about resources.

After the program, I hope to work in a position in which I am working with metadata, including developing models, cleaning and remediating metadata, and optimizing resource discovery. I would especially enjoy doing this within an academic library as part of a digital library program, so that I would have ample opportunity to participate in reference, instruction, and outreach as well. However, I would also be happy to do this sort of work in a corporate context, perhaps in digital asset management or in content strategy. In the long term, I would like to be in a managerial, forward-thinking position, where I could set policies and mentor younger professionals.